

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

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PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 SCEM-02

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9355

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E. O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO SISCO INTERVIEWS

SUMMARY. AFTER INITIAL STRAIGHT REPORTAGE, ISRAELI PRESS COMMENTATORS NOW SHIFTING TO RATHER HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD SISCO INTERVIEWS AND NYT GWERTZMAN ARTICLE, WHICH THEY ASSUME DEPT INSPIRED. FAIRLY TYPICAL IS ESHED PIECE AUGUST 9, IN WHICH HE ASSERTS THAT GOI HAS NO INTENTION OF REVIEWING ITS POSITION AND HAS NO INDICATION THAT WHITE HOUSE AGREES WITH SUGGESTION THAT ISRAEL THINK MORE ABOUT ENERGY CRISIS AND SEEK SOME MOVEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT FRONT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY VERBATIM TRANSLATION OF KEY PORTION OF AUGUST 9 ARTICLE IN DAVAR BY HAGGAI ESHED, WHICH IS FAIRLY REPRESENTATIVE OF LATEST ISRAELI PRESS LINE ON SISCO ITV AND MAARIV INTERVIEWS AND GWERTZMAN NYT ARTICLE.

2. BEGIN TEXT. THE NEW YORK TIMES HAS PUBLISHED A REPORT
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ABOUT THE US EFFORT TO GET ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES TO RE-

EXAMINE THEIR STANDS REGARDING A SOLUTION OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. IN JERUSALEM NOTHING IS KNOWN ABOUT A SPECIAL US EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN ITS POLICY, EXCEPT FOR A FEW GENERAL REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT VOICED BY US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE JOSEPH SISCO IN AN INTERVIEW ON ISRAELI TELEVISION, WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN HEARD IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR SISCO AND THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, SIMCHA DINITZ. IT SEEMS THAT THE SAME REMARKS CAME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, WHICH GAVE THEM A GOOD DEAL OF PROMINENCE, BUT IN JERUSALEM THERE IS NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO RE-EXAMINE ISRAEL'S STAND OR TO BE OVERLY IMPRESSED BY SISCO'S REMARKS.

3. ACCORDING TO ONE "TRAIN OF THOUGHT" IN JERUSALEM, THERE ARE CIRCLES IN THE US ADMINISTRATION WHICH ARE INTERESTED IN EXPLOITING THE WEAKNESS OF THE WHITE HOUSE AS A RESULT OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR AND OTHER AFFAIRS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SISCO'S ACTIVITY IS INFLUENCED BY THAT TENDENCY. IN JERUSALEM IT IS NOT KNOWN THAT SISCO'S ACTIVITY IS SUPPORTED BY THE WHITE HOUSE, OR THAT THE WHITE HOUSE REGARDS THE PRESENT MOMENT AS SUITABLE FOR OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN THE MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY, AND THIS NEW ACTIVITY OF SISCO APPEARS SOMEWHAT STRANGE TO JERUSALEM.

4. THE THOUGHT, WHICH SEEMS TO BE MOST REASONABLE IN THIS CONNECTION, IS THAT SISCO IS TRYING TO TRANQUILIZE THE ARAB STATES AFTER THE

US VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND TO "PREACH MORALS IN A GENERAL KIND OF WAY" IN A LOUD VOICE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL ALIKE.

5. AS REGARDS THE FACT THAT SISCO MENTIONED THE ENERGY CRISIS, IT IS POINTED OUT IN JERUSALEM THAT THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IS NOT THE CAUSE OF THE US ENERGY CRISIS, AND CANNOT HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON EITHER A SOLUTION OR AN AGGRAVATION OF THE CRISIS. THE IMPORTATION OF MIDDLE EAST OIL TO THE US NOW REACHES NOT MORE THAN SEVEN PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE US OIL IMPORTATION, WHOSE MAIN IMPORT SOURCES ARE CANADA, VENEZUELA, AND NIGERIA. EVEN IF THE OIL IMPORTATION FROM THE MIDDLE EAST SHOULD INCREASE IN A FEW YEARS, IT WOULD NOT SURPASS THE RATE OF FIFTEEN PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE US OIL IMPORTATION. THE PARTIAL LACK OF OIL IN THE US

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DERIVES MAINLY FROM THE DELAY IN SETTING UP REFINERIES AND DEEP-SEA OIL PORTS, SUITABLE FOR THE LOADING OF GIANT OIL-TANKERS, LIKE THE PORTS IN HOLLAND AND IRELAND. ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE EFFORT OF THE BIG OIL COMPANIES TO SWALLOW THE SMALL OIL COMPANIES BY PREVENTING SUPPLIES FROM REACHING THEM AND BY CREATING AN ARTIFICIAL SHORTAGE.

6. THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT DOES NOT COME IN ANYWHERE IN THAT

FABRIC OF FACTORS AND CAUSES, JUST AS THE CONFLICT WAS NOT THE REASON FOR THE NATIONALIZATION OF OIL RESOURCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, NOR FOR THE INCREASE IN OIL PRICES, NOR FOR THE POLICY OF PRODUCTION OR LIMITATION OF PRODUCTION BY ARAB COUNTRIES AND LARGE OIL COMPANIES, WHICH DERIVE FROM PURELY COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

7. SHOULD THE ARAB COUNTRIES DECREASE OIL PRODUCTION, IT WOULD BE IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR PROFITS AND TO ENSURE THE VALUE OF THEIR PROFITS, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ISRAEL OR US SUPPORT OF ISRAEL. MOREOVER, THE PROBLEM WHICH IS EVEN MORE PRESSING FOR THE US IN THIS CONNECTION IS THE DOLLAR RESERVES ACCUMULATING IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES (FROM THEIR OIL), WHICH UNDERMINE AND UPSET THE MONETARY SYSTEM OF THE WORLD.

8. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, JERUSALEM TREATS SISCO'S HINTS ABOUT THE "ENERGY CRISIS" WITH RESERVE, AND IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISED AT THE FACT THAT A SENIOR US OFFICIAL IS PREPARED TO PRESENT THE US GOVERNMENT AS BEING CAPABLE OF CHANGING ITS MIDDLE EAST POLICY UNDER THE PRESSURE OF ARAB OIL BLACKMAIL. END TEXT.
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